

Curatorial Reimaginings



**British Art Network Annual Conference
Thursday 28 & Friday 29 November 2024**

At least two decades into the 'curatorial turn', and after successive declarations about the 'post-curatorial', the 'para-curatorial' and the curator's mutation into artist (or vice versa), the field we share as curators, researchers, activists and artists of different generations and different experiences continues to transform. While decolonial initiatives, eco-critical awareness and social justice claims may be foregrounded as never before, these sit alongside public sector cuts, unprecedented professional precarity and exhausting 'culture wars'.

Curatorial Reimaginings will be an opportunity to share experiences, reflect and connect in a convivial atmosphere.

This year's conference has been programmed with support from a convening committee of past and present members of BAN's Steering Group who have also been part of the Emerging Curators Group, in response to proposals received via open call.

*Committee members are:
Cicely Robinson (ECG 2015-18)
Lauren Craig (ECG 2020-21)
Basil Olton (ECG 2022)
Rhona Sword (ECG 2023)
Jessica Wan Ka Po (ECG 2024)*

The following conference sessions will include live captioning:

- 28 November: 'Come As You Are' – Kindly Shifting the Curatorial with Grand Union
- 29 November: all sessions taking place in the Performance Studio

To view live captioning on your device, please scan the QR code, or go to:

121captions.1capapp.com/event/pmc



Programme

Thursday 28 November

Pre-Selected Options

14:00-16:00 'Come As You Are' – Kindly Shifting the Curatorial with Grand Union | Meet at Centrala Gallery (ground floor) Unit 4, Minerva Works, 158 Fazeley St, Birmingham B5 5RT. With BSL interpretation and live captioning

14:30-16:00 Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery | Meet in the Round Room First Floor, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Chamberlain Sq, Birmingham B3 3DH

17:00-18:30 Conference Gathering | The Hive Café & Bakery, New Standard Works, 43-47 Vittoria St, Birmingham B1 3PE

Friday 29 November

Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B12 9QH

09:15-10:00 Registration | MAC Foyer

10:00-10:15 Welcome | Performance Studio. With BSL interpretation and live captioning

10:15-10:40 Drafts | Performance Studio
Recitations delivered by Jade Foster (DASH). With BSL interpretation and live captioning

10:40-11:30 Rapid-Fire Presentations with Q&A | Performance Studio. With BSL interpretation and live captioning

Co-production in regional art collections – Sophie Hatchwell & Greg Salter (University of Birmingham)

Whose gallery is it anyway? Reflections and Findings from a Community Curation Experiment – Ilaria Casini (Edinburgh Printmakers)

The Ben Uri Gallery and Museum: Navigating the Digital and Global Turns with Immigration – Ana-Maria Milčić (Ben Uri Gallery and Museum)

Podcasting the Past: Audio, Access and Authority in the Arts – Jelena Sofronijevic (independent)

Break with tea and coffee

11:45-12:45 Self-guided visit: *Waste Age: What can design do?*, MAC Gallery

12:00-12:45 **Parallel sessions**

Panel: *Festival Futures* | Performance Studio. With BSL interpretation and live captioning. 40m panel – 5m movement/settle time at start.

Workshop: *Gentle Gestures* | Bryant Room, Bryant Suite. 35m workshop – 10m movement/settle time at start

Workshop: *What role does the curator play in social justice movements?* | Saintbury Room, Bryant Suite. 35m workshop – 10m movement/settle time at start

Workshop: *Cultural Reforesting: Finding the language of working with nature/being part of nature* | Pocket Garden. 35m workshop – 10m movement/settle time at start

'*Restore/Explore*' | Deloitte Room

Lunch with vegan Balti hot fork buffet

14:00-15:20 Visit: Barber Institute of Fine Arts | meet at MAC entrance by BAN conference welcome desk. Shuttle bus provided

14:15-15:15 Self-guided visit: *Waste Age: What can design do?*, MAC Gallery

14:15-15:00 **Parallel Sessions**

Workshop: Radical Imagination – care centred approaches to curating entangled histories | Performance Studio. With BSL interpretation and live captioning. 35m workshop – 10m movement/settle time at start

Workshop: Gentle Gestures | Bryant Room, Bryant Suite. 35m workshop – 10m movement/settle time at start

Workshop: What role does the curator play in social justice movements? | Saintbury Room, Bryant Suite. 35m workshop – 10m movement/settle time at start

'Restore/Explore' | Deloitte Room

Break with tea and coffee

15:30-17:00 Closing Session | Performance Studio. With BSL interpretation and live captioning. 10m movement/settle time at start

Plenary Roundtable with Q&A. Chaired by Sarah Victoria Turner (Paul Mellon Centre), with Melanie Pocock (Ikon), Marta Marsicka & Jazz Swali (Backlit Gallery) and Leanne Green (Tate Liverpool).

Closing words from Martin Myrone (BAN Convenor) and the Conference Convening Committee

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Conference Convening Committee

Dr Cicely Robinson is Senior Curator of Paintings at Royal Collection Trust. Over the last decade, she has worked with varied fine and decorative art collections across the museum, historic house, and gallery sector, including at the Royal Academy of Arts and the Houses of Parliament. She has also worked with Spencer & Fry as a freelance heritage consultant, co-ordinating large-scale production filming at historic locations.

Cicely started her career at the National Horseracing Museum, Newmarket, where she curated the opening hang of British sporting art at Palace House. Subsequently working at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village, Surrey, Cicely became head of the curatorial department in 2018, with responsibility for collections, conservation and displays.

Lauren Craig (she/her/hers) is a social-media shy, internet-curious cultural futurist based in London. Her practice intentionally moves slowly between curation, performance, installation, art writing, moving images and auto-ethnographic photography. Through collaborative live engagement, systems thinking and social archival histories, Lauren elevates lived experience as a tool for reframing past and present underexposed narratives.

Lauren's current research maps and elevates the creative genealogies of contemporary celebration and commemoration through ethical alternative curatorial practices, centralising the work of women/femme artists of colour. She is committed to creating and supporting the living systems and creative life force within the arts contributing to the direction of many organisations through board representation, creative consultancy and servile leadership at multiple levels.

Basil Olton is an artist, curator and researcher with studies in ceramics, fine art practice and arts policy, exploring decolonisation, institutional commemoration, power and display.

Utilising archival documents as a mode of expression, Basil has curated exhibitions *What We Have Become* (2024), an exploration into the implicit violence and silence of the archive and *Look We Here: Curating the Caribbean* (2018) at the V&A, London, unpacking the meaning and representation of Caribbean art and culture. Recent talks include the *Decolonisation of Ceramics* seminars with the current research culminating in the *Strength in Weakness* exhibition at the British Ceramics Biennale (2025). In 2023 Basil was the ECG Continuity Representative on the BAN steering group.

Jessica Wan (She/They) is a curator and writer who works to create culturally hybrid spaces and platform diasporic and transnational narratives. She has produced projects with institutions including iniva, Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation (TrAIN), Photofusion, Tate and the Sarabande Foundation.

Rhona Sword is a freelance writer and curator based in Edinburgh, whose practice is accompanied by her work in development. This has allowed her to consider the relationship between curatorial practice, policy development and public funding. She has worked with a range of organisations including the Edinburgh Art Festival and Hidden Door, where she curated the Graduate Artist showcase in 2023. In 2022 she was awarded the Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grant as part of work to research the public reclaiming of libraries and archives, looking specifically at museums under the L'Internationale banner.

She completed her MSc by Research in Collections and Curating at the University of Edinburgh in 2023, where she was awarded the Baldwin Brown Dissertation Prize for her work 'Space for everyone? Reimagining participation and inclusion in state-funded

contemporary art institutions' that interrogated the effects of the Arts Council England 'Let's Create' strategy on institutional curating practices and our understanding of cultural value.

Along with 3 other members of the ECG, in November 2023 she took part in a Group Research Project to undertake a survey of the ground up cultural ecology of Leeds.

'Come As You Are' – Kindly Shifting the Curatorial with Grand Union

Hannah Wallis and Jo Capper work together co-directing the gallery and collaborative programmes at Grand Union. Working together we have been building a strategy that weaves, connects and creates experiences both inside and outside the bounds of conventional sites for art. We are proactively working to positively transform experiences of exclusion and marginalisation and create a practice that integrates the nuance, subtlety and potential joy and warmth of access and inclusion in contemporary visual art practice. We are frustrated by the neo-liberal tokenistic approaches to engagement too often performed in many cultural spaces. In response we do not simply ask, "how do we get people in?" Instead we continually listen with our hearts to what is needed and wanted and through this process we have developed our current methodology, "Come As You Are".

We will present through discussion and a local walk three long-term projects that demonstrate our work, *The Growing Project*, *Exodus Crooks* and *Field Commissions with Cooking Sections*, setting the context for our curatorial approach and demonstrating how we are gently and kindly shifting the curatorial, creating a more democratic landscape whereby we are working with ideas of embodiment and intuitive magic, creating space for playfulness and transformational change.

Jo Capper is an artist, curator, and educator with a strong desire to heal, restore, and do good in the world. She creates alternative

regenerative cultural and living practices that start with simple acts of growing or sharing food – embodying the cultural specifics of human conviviality. Through building communal practices she is interested in the phenomenology of the making process and imagining new structures for communal living. Often starting with pain or conflict her work gets in between these intersections and uses trauma-informed approaches to remedy and regenerate.

Hannah Wallis is an Artist, Curator and d/Deaf activist with a practice exploring the nuances of communication and sensory deprivation. Her work sits at the intersection of access, equity and embodied transformation. Having previously worked at Nottingham Contemporary and Wysing Arts Centre, Hannah is now co-programme director at Grand Union, Birmingham. She also serves as trustee for a-n Artists Information Company and Collective Text and sits on the advisory panel for Two Queens Gallery, Leicester. Hannah was co-lead of The Art of Captioning BAN Research Group from 2020-2021 and a member of the BAN/YCBA Curatorial Forum in 2022.

Visit | Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Join Birmingham Museums staff Victoria Osborne, Senior Curator (Art) and Andrea Bonnell, Participation Manager, for an introduction to the new displays at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery and the temporary exhibition *Victorian Radicals*. There will be the chance to see special displays *Curtis Holder: Drawing Carlos Acosta*, *'Modern Muse'* by Arpita Shah and *Deviance & Difference* curated by Osman Yousefzada, and to hear more about the Museum's future plans.

Victoria Osborne is Senior Curator (Art) at Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT) with curatorial responsibility for the city of Birmingham's collections of historic and contemporary art, and is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham. Her specialist interest is in British 19th-century drawings and watercolours, and she has been the organising curator for several major loan exhibitions in this field. Victoria's recent research focuses on artists and makers

associated with the Pre-Raphaelites and Arts and Crafts movement in Birmingham. Victoria co-convened with Kate Nichols and Sabrina Rahman the BAN research group [Race, Empire and the Pre-Raphaelites](#).

Conference Gathering | The Hive

Connect and catch up with other conference participants in a unique community space combining café, gallery, artist residence and makers studio. With curated catering from Kaye Winwood (Gulp) grounding us sensorily in a local historical context, and a commissioned poetic keynote from Candice Nembhard.

Accessibility: level access, disabled toilet, quiet room.

Candice Nembhard (okcandice) is a writer, artist-curator, archivist and musician based between Birmingham and Berlin. They are the Digital Curator for Birmingham Museum & Gallery and 2023/24 Woven Foundation Curatorial Fellow; previously a Jerwood Arts Curatorial Fellow, Obsidian Foundation Poetry Fellow and artist-curator at Eastside Projects.

Elsewhere, they are the founder-director of [all fruits ripe](#); an independent platform for queer filmmakers of colour and [Bedtime Stories](#); a live radio club championing experiments in ambient, electronic(a) and downtempo music. Candice also hosts [Must Be The Music](#) on Refuge Worldwide and [Bedtime Stories](#) on Cashmere Radio. Their practice is concerned with methodologies of grief through text, sound, moving image and collective performance alongside the production, preservation and maintenance of Black audio/visual archives and libraries.

Kaye Winwood has over 25 years' experience as an Arts Professional specialising in visual art, food, moving image and performance. In 2022, Kaye created GULP to offer a one-of-a-kind meeting, dining and creative space for curious appetites with a taste for the extraordinary. Her practice invites audiences to engage, explore and

enjoy her 'beyond-the-plate' approach which reconsiders the dining experience as a sensorial playground using food as an art material.

Kaye's work fuses sensory design with visual arts and gastronomy to create new and meaningful eating environments which enthrall diners and audiences.

Drafts

Drafts is a series of recitations from disabled and/or migrant curators that focus on the concept of 'gut knowledge', as a way of doing and thinking which relies on trust, intuition and flexibility (within a Disability social model) – evidencing how the curatorial in itself is neurodivergent.

How can we see 'the curatorial' as a non-typical way of making sense of the world? How can we also see 'the curatorial' as something not just belonging to the curator? Especially when we value the 'gut knowledge' – and choices – that lead to some form of 'work' (be that writing, criticising, organising, assembling, cataloguing, displaying, feeling or doing art).

This offering expands from Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASH) system change work and the Black Curators Collective's (BCC) 'Pace & Flow' programme led by Black disabled, sick and neurodivergent curators. The ways in which people articulate their existence and give space for others to articulate theirs (Christina Sharpe, *Ordinary Notes*; Taraneh Fazeli, *Sick Time, Sleepy Time, Crip Time: Against Capitalism's Temporal Bullying* – a field guide; Khanyisile Mbongwa, 'triangulation' and *Ebuhlanti Republic*; Raghavi Chinnadurai's 'Kolam'; *Mimosa House*, 'transfeminisms'; Elvira Dyangani Ose's 'Possible Museum', MACBA) has also impacted the thinking for this contribution.

A draft can be liberatory, as everything is always in motion within a draft, including possible futures for 'the curatorial'.

Jade Foster is a British curator, artist and art historian of Afro-Caribbean heritage based in Nottingham. They are a Curator at DASH; a Public Programme Curator at Primary, and a Trustee / Board Member of Nottingham Contemporary. At DASH they curate their system change work, The DASH Library, and Future Curators Programme (FCP) – a consortium and residency programme for Disabled curators within 7 visual arts institutions across the UK. At Primary, they lead the development of exhibitions and digital commissions, focusing on brokering international collaborations – notably curating *Imagining Otherwise* featuring artists Ashley Holmes, Turner Prize 2024 nominee Jasleen Kaur, and Jala Wahid. Jade has an art studio at BACKLIT (Nottingham) and is a member of AWITA, the British Art Network and the Black Curators Collective.

Nikita Gill is an advocate for art in the North of England and uses Carnavalesque praxis as a joyful and active disruption of colonialism. She is an artist and curator in training currently engaging in practice with the International institute of visual arts (iniva), Manchester Art Gallery and Touchstones, Rochdale. Her lived experiences are underpinned by her neurodiversity and she is dedicated to nurturing empathy towards artists, artworkers and the people she dreams with. Currently Nikita is exploring collective cultures through a Queer, Decolonial lens. This work presents resistance as healing and recovery against oppression. Nikita hopes that the work will underpin new ways of being in the world as 'other'. The work and structures of decision making will support a trauma informed practice, and how Nikita works with people, objects and histories.

Salma Tuqan is a contemporary art and design curator and cultural strategist. She is Director of Nottingham Contemporary and from 2019–2023 was Deputy Director of Delfina Foundation. Prior to Delfina Foundation she worked as the Contemporary Middle East Curator at the V&A for eight years, where she was responsible for Middle Eastern art and design programming at the museum, co-curated the biennial international Jameel Prize exhibition, and co-

founded the Culture in Crisis stream. She worked at Art Dubai from its inauguration in 2007 to 2011 as Head of Artists' Projects. She has contributed to other projects as an independent curator and facilitator, including Palestine c/o Venice at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). She works closely with multiple cultural organisations on strategy.

Rapid-Fire Presentations

Session Chair: Martin Myrone is Convenor, British Art Network, based at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London. At the Centre he holds the role of Head of Grants, Networks & Learning. Before becoming BAN Convenor in September 2020, Martin spent over twenty years in curatorial roles at Tate, London.

Co-production in regional art collections

Over the past year, we have researched practices of co-production in public museums and galleries across the Midlands, in collaboration with curators and co-producers from public collections. We explored two questions: first, how can co-production be used as a method for interpreting artworks, what role can art history play in facilitating this? Second, how has the regional context of the Midlands shaped practices of co-production? Our research, itself co-produced, shows co-production takes a range of forms at different moments and in different local contexts. It is used to diversify and multiply the voices and experiences at the heart of museums and galleries, to explore the complexities of local identities, and to offer agency to audiences. At its best, it folds museums and their publics into relationships of dialogue, exchange, and care. It has the potential to destabilise traditional hierarchies inherent to museums and galleries – through co-production, knowledge is not simply shared but mutually created. However, pre-existing power dynamics and structural issues around access pose challenges for open dialogue and collaboration. Our research shows that the success of co-production is very much dependent on establishing ongoing, trusting relationships with

community co-producers, and on further improving access to collections and their histories.

Sophie Hatchwell is an art historian working at the University of Birmingham. Her research focuses on British art in the twentieth century, in particular word, image and regional display cultures. Sophie works closely with museums and galleries to develop and deliver her research: she leads the Midland Art Papers project, which facilitates collections-based research in collaboration with public museums across the Midlands, and co-led the 'Post war painting in Regional Collections' British Art Network Research Group with Hana Leaper, from which her work on co-production grew.

Greg Salter is a specialist in art from Britain since 1945, focusing particularly on histories of gender and sexuality. He published a book called *Art And Masculinity In Post-War Britain: Reconstructing Home* in 2019. He is currently researching a transnational history of 'queer art' from Britain between 1957 and 1988.

Whose gallery is it anyway? Reflections and Findings from a Community Curation Experiment

On 18th April 2024 Edinburgh Printmakers invited its community to their spring exhibition opening. However, nothing was present in the street-facing white cube gallery, just some shelves and three prompts: 1. Bring an artwork, 2. Hang it up, 3. Move them around.

Prompted by our status as the first open-access printmaking studio in the UK, we reflected on questions of authority and ownership present within traditional notions of curation as expressed by a singular institutional vision. A question posed during a programming meeting was thus presented to the public and became title of this project: "Whose Gallery Is It Anyway?"

For two months we handed over curation and use of our gallery to anyone who wanted to participate. The response was overwhelming;

we received over 400 submissions, spanning media and styles. The gallery space was animated daily: becoming a classroom, rehearsal space, yoga studio, kitchen, playground, theatre stage, meeting room and more.

With the display evolving continuously, the public redefined the art gallery as a communal space for sharing, meeting, exploring and questioning established expectations. The feedback we received and relationships we established have prompted re-evaluations of our own commitments and strategies, with an emphasis on our heritage and social role.

Ilaria Casini is an art historian and public programmes curator based in Scotland. She has worked for several institutions assisting visitors' experience and fostering community participation. Her research interests focus on exhibition studies, critical museology, and public engagement programs developed through feminist and critical race theories. She holds a First-Class Honours Degree in Art History and Film & Visual Culture and a Master's degree in Art Theory.

She currently works for Edinburgh Printmakers, leading the engagement programme of a successful National Lottery Heritage Fund project called, Castle Mills: Then & Now, researching the cultural, built, social and intangible heritages connected to printmaking and the old industrial neighbourhoods of Edinburgh.

The Ben Uri Gallery and Museum: Navigating the Digital and Global Turns with Immigration

The Ben Uri Gallery and Museum, which focuses on the contributions of immigrant, refugee, and Jewish artists to British visual culture since 1900, is undergoing a transformative shift towards a digital platform. This transition is deeply informed by postcolonial thought and aligns with the global turn in art history. Our contribution will explore the museum's evolution from its origins as a Jewish Art Society to its current expansive project, which includes artists from

diverse backgrounds who have immigrated to the UK, whether fleeing oppressive regimes or seeking new opportunities. The Ben Uri Research Unit, with its comprehensive database of over 3,000 profiles from more than 100 countries, recently integrated Eddie Chambers' Diaspora Artists Network, which has been documenting the contributions of African and Caribbean artists for the past 15 years. Ben Uri's central theme of immigration serves as a lens through which we can trace the evolution of the UK's art scene and the shifting narratives in art discourse. We will present our project through three case studies that highlight our engagement in both physical and digital spaces, exploring how curatorial practices adapt to digital environments and reflect the complexities of global perspectives.

Ana-Maria Milčić holds a PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art, specialising in interwar Italian avant-garde art. Prior to relocating to the UK, she curated exhibitions in Croatia, focusing on the interplay between art, politics and rebellion. Notable exhibitions include D'Annunzio's Martyr (2021), First World War and Avant-garde Art: Deconstruction– Construction (2014), and Artist on Vacation (2014). Currently, Ana serves as a Research Officer at Ben Uri Gallery and Museum. She is preparing an exhibition for 2025, titled Language Barriers to Bridges: Migration and Avant-garde Art, which will examine immigrant avant-garde artists' exploration of the relationship between words and images.

Podcasting the Past: Audio, Access and Authority in the Arts

During the COVID lockdowns, audio, and particularly podcasts, boomed. Though conceived prior to the pandemic, EMPIRE LINES - which uncovers the unexpected, often two-way, flows of empires through art - was launched in this context, making its intention to expand the museum space beyond its borders more literal. Recorded on location across the UK, the episodes preserve exhibitions in a manner which – unlike books and catalogues, often accumulated in

stores or wasted – are freely and globally accessible. Organisations who choose not to hold permanent collections or acquire, like the Migration Museum in Lewisham, are also leading the way in using audio to generate alternative, anti-colonial archives. This highlights how audio has also been used as a curatorial or institutional survival strategy, addressing issues of precarity and sustainability.

The podcast is often described as a ‘curated’ series of episodes; crucially, it is structured as a collection of conversations, rather than interviews. From my position as an independent freelancer, they also raise questions of authority in the arts and culture. I will draw on how audio has served as an ‘alternative’ route to – and how I integrate it within – my curatorial practice.

Jelena Sofronijevic (@empirelinespodcast) is a producer, curator, writer, and researcher based in London. Their curatorial projects include *Invasion Ecology* (2024) and *EMPIRE LINES*, a podcast which uncovers the unexpected flows of empires through art. They also produce ‘historicity’, a new series of audio walking tours exploring how cities got to be the way they are, recorded on location in London (2022) and Tokyo (2023), and works in print.

Jelena works at the intersections of cultural history, politics, and the arts, highlighting continuities over time, and seeks to make complex ideas accessible, not simple. Much of their research is focussed on pluralising representations of CESEE/diasporic communities and cultures. More widely, they seek to platform perspectives often marginalised or excluded from representation, especially in anti-colonial and environmental activism.

Visit | Waste Age Exhibition, MAC Gallery

This exhibition tells the story of the environmental crisis and marks MAC’s first collaboration with the Design Museum to highlight the current crisis and design’s role in the problem. Visitors will be

immersed in the waste crisis before being shown the transformative potential of new design approaches that are redefining fashion, construction, food, electronics or packaging and the new materials that will help shape a cleaner future. The exhibition features a new sculptural commission inspired by clothes waste markets in Nigeria by Birmingham-based artist Abdulrazaq Awofeso.

Waste Age is a touring exhibition by the Design Museum, London and curated by Gemma Curtin and Justin McGuirk. MAC is the only tour venue in the UK.

Panel | Festival Futures

This panel discussion brings together representatives from four UK organisations who are curating contemporary visual art in a festival format and has been convened by Liverpool Biennial as part of an ongoing investigation into the future viability and sustainability of the festival format in the visual arts. The panellists will discuss the positives of delivering for ‘the moment’ and how one festival programme can embed or instil the necessary groundwork to sustain a festival’s future; the unique challenges of curating festivals, sustainable futures and programming across diverse venues and in response to place.

Marie-Anne McQuay is Curator, Liverpool Biennial 2025. Prior to joining Arts&Heritage as Director of Projects, Marie-Anne McQuay was Head of Programme at the Bluecoat, Liverpool (2015 – June 2022) where she curated exhibitions and commissions by Larissa Sansour, Adham Faramawy, Suki Chan, Jade Montserrat, Serena Korda, Jonathan Baldock, Elaine Mitchener and Rosa-Johan Uddoh. She was Guest International Curator for Wales in Venice 2019 with artist Sean Edwards and Tŷ Pawb, Wrexham. Previously Marie-Anne was Curator at Spike Island, Bristol (2007-2013). She is currently part of the Arts Council Collection Acquisitions Committee 2022-25, on the Advisory of Board of At The Library, and External Examiner for

Art Galleries & Museum Studies MA, University of Leicester 2023-26.

Annie Jael Kwan is an independent curator and researcher based in London. Her practice is located at the intersection of contemporary art, cultural and pedagogical activism with an interest in archives, feminist, queer and alternative knowledge, collective relations, solidarity and spirituality. She is the Curator for the third edition of Brent Biennial, taking place in 2025, where she will be leading the Biennial with a focus on partnerships, communities and collective enquiry. Annie is a founding council member of Asia Forum, the Director of curatorial initiative Something Human and also leads intergenerational research network Asia-Art-Activism.

Dr Ian Sergeant is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at University of the Arts London and an independent curator-researcher. He has an MA in Contemporary Curatorial Practice and completed a practice-based PhD at Birmingham City University in 2022. He is Co-Artist Director of performing and visual arts company Kalaboration CIC. Curated exhibitions, projects and events include *The more things change...*, (Wolverhampton Art Gallery 2023); *...Like a short cut through the brambles*, (Coventry Biennial 2023-24) *Nation's Finest*, *Putting Down Roots and Birthing*, (Birmingham 2022 Festival 2022); *Interference:s*, (Coventry Biennial 2021); *Cut & Mix*, (New Art Exchange 2021); *Donald Rodney* at Celine Gallery, (Glasgow International 2021); *Reimagining Donald Rodney*, (Vivid Projects 2016).

Kim McAleese is a curator originally from Belfast, now based in Scotland. She is currently working as Director of Edinburgh Art Festival, and previously was Programme Director of Grand Union, Birmingham. Her practice is centred around sharing, listening, supporting, caring, conversing and exchanging. She is an alumnus of Curatorlab in Konstfack (Stockholm), and of the ICI Curatorial Intensive programme. She is co-founder of Household, a collective of curators who organise public art projects in Northern Ireland, and a previous co-director of Catalyst Arts. She was an Associate Lecturer

at the University of Birmingham, is Vice-Chair of Outburst Queer Arts Festival, and has served on the board of New Art West Midlands and Visual Artists Ireland. She was on the jury for the Turner Prize 2021 and British Pavilion at Venice 2024.

Workshop | Gentle Gestures

'Gentle Gestures' is a term, signal, mark, motion, movement of the body, a research subgroup, a conversation that invites inquiry into submerged, fugitive practices of gentle change beyond the now increasingly strained ideas of practices of care. Researching across art, creative practices, pedagogical inquiry, practice-based research, and critical theory, Gentle Gestures aims to explore how knowledge production is embodied, pleasurable, multiple, empowered, navigated, inflicted, and shared. The workshop considers gestures as relational and embodied, existing as they do in the interstices between us / you / them / we. Come play with tools that aid our abilities to make gestures gentle(r) - pedagogical and personal tools that allow us to change the dynamics of a setting, find ways to work together, position ourselves towards learning and decentring curating from output to process.

We're thinking about what curatorial activity feels like or what conferences do, what is pleasurable but difficult about them and what can be done in their community (hooks, 1994). This workshop invites you to collate, explore and distribute elements of the curatorial and its collaborative elements (whether accidental or intentional!), mediated through a series of artistic-pedagogical tools we have made and will bring.

Sophie Mak-Schram cares about the radicality possible in the 'and' between art and education. She works with others, both as method and form. Her work spans experiential education, collective practice and (artistic) research.

She's currently a Curriculum Redefined fellow and Lecturer of Art Pedagogies at the University of Leeds, as well as one of 7 commissioned artists working on decolonising National Museum Wales across 2023 - 2025, and co-convenor of Gentle Gestures, a research group on alternative pedagogies. Sophie is particularly interested in radical pedagogies, decolonial knowledges and the 'and' between art and education.

Anouk Hoogendoorn is an artistic researcher who works with text, textile, and sound. They are currently doing a PhD researching material conditions for linguistic practices grounded in queer and disability studies at Teesside University, UK and Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), CH. Anouk was formerly part of PEERS '22/'23, ZHdK and recently a visiting researcher at Access In The Making Lab, Concordia University, Montreal, CA and an artist in residence at Turku Gallery, Turku, FI. They are part of Gentle Gestures, a research group on alternative pedagogies and of Words As Matter, a language-based artistic research group.

Roshana Rubin Mayhew is an interdisciplinary artistic researcher presently focused on holding and wrestling-with a bodyweight of clay. This practice-based research investigates generative approaches to trauma and the collective live charge through methods of improvisation...or, weight, rhythm, rubs, and sweet spots. This places emphasis on bodily knowledge, disciplinarily dissonant experimentation, and philosophies of emergence. With a background in visual art and body-based practices, performance, and music, Roshana has shared and developed work through exhibitions, live performances, performance lectures, workshops, publications, and neckerchiefs. Roshana is currently undertaking research at the Royal College of Art, collaborating with the pedagogical collective Gentle Gestures, lecturing at Istituto Europeo di Design Milan, and living in London, UK.

Paul Alexander Stewart is an artist and filmmaker, based in Gateshead. He is currently the Principal Lecturer for Art and Curating at Teesside University and co-leads the MA Curating (Apprentice programme). His work explores the intersections of communing, collaborating and humour through spatial practice, filmmaking, workshops as practice, and Karaoke. Currently collaborating with Sarah Perks as Forms of Circulation and developing new research on arts pedagogies as part of Gentle Gestures. Previously founded the Alternative Art College (2011-2014), co-founded, and directed the Middlesbrough Art Week (2016-2019) and has published books, articles and texts on art, critical pedagogy, and capitalism. Currently a co-editor for *Engage* Journal and his latest film with Forms of Circulation was shown at numerous film festivals including the London Film Festival 2024. Gentle Gestures' next editorial will be published this Fall in *Makings Journal*.

Workshop | What role does the curator play in social justice movements?

If culture holds a mirror to society to both reflect & transform it (as in Alice's looking glass) then what authority or responsibility do curators have to advocate for positive change? What are our curatorial futurities within the contexts of reduced funding & increasing derision of marginalised groups? Can or should the curator be an activist through their practice?

Join Rebecca for an interactive workshop based upon the World Cafe Method to open up space to speak to these questions. Using examples from recent exhibitions & other curatorial (or curatorially-aligned) offerings/happenings/activities, we will speak to, around and beyond the above questions.

Discussion points may include:

- **'What's left in the hallway?'**, challenges with curating socially engaged art that does not have a 'product'. Reflections on the curatorial approach of both Hettie Judah's show *Acts of Creation* as it was displayed at the MAC & the MAC's broader Season of Motherhood in which the show was programmed.
- **'Pride is still a protest'**, using community arts workshops & other collective art-making/presenting as a tool for consciousness raising & community building. Inspiration taken from Rumps Queer Maker group which provides space for political art-making for 12-18 year olds.
- **'Rein it in'**, taking curatorial risks when funding & other means of support are manoeuvred as tools for control & censorship. Inspiration taken from the redacted Creative Scotland funding of Rein, an £85k project intended to explore dyke sexualities.

Rebecca Livesey-Wright (they/she) is a cross-disciplinary artist, curator and facilitator working predominantly in socially engaged, participatory and collaborative practice. Their current creative-action-research focus is on how the maternal, m*therhood, and matrescence intersect with the arts, from both practitioner and an audience perspective. She is particularly interested in 'divergent m*therhoods', a term Rebecca has coined to refer to the experiences of m*thers who do not exist within the dominant representations & constructs of motherhood, both as a lived experience & as an institution. Rebecca also produces work and projects on the themes of the climate crisis and food as a tool for community togetherness.

Workshop | Cultural Reforesting - Finding the language of working with nature/being part of nature

Accessibility: *This workshop will take place outside, in MAC's Pocket Garden, which has bench seating. Please bring your coat if you are attending this workshop.*

As a curator of a contemporary art gallery space with a woodland, on the river Thames, in an urban environment, I find myself being the curatorial custodian of a decade-long artist-led research programme, Cultural Reforesting. I use the words custodian and ‘find myself’ purposefully.

It is a provocation that aims to respond through place, peoples and ecosystems to the ecological crisis, with a core question – how can we renew our relationship with nature? – opening the research landscape of this programme.

The programme was initiated by a Local Authority Arts Service, adding a fascinating political and local government layer, in 2020. A key factor, returned to frequently is the failure of the neo-liberal English language, and the need for arts spaces to bridge the eco-poetic with the pragmatic and accessible to support this fundamental, absolute relationship.

The workshop will test language, including using embodied, gestural and image-laden interactions, when contextualised by the agency of a place’s vibrant ecosystem, might begin to centre a methodology for supporting ever-evolving language (as, of course, language does not sit still). This workshop will be supported by the work of artists, alongside the more-than-human world who have created with us, our ecosystem at Orleans House Gallery, and further participant groups who have worked with the artists through their research.

Andy Franzkowiak is a programmer with Richmond Arts Service, based in the remarkable ecosystem of Orleans House Gallery. Since 2020, he has brought an Arts and interdisciplinary research approach to curating the gallery, the wider programme, and strategy for the Service. Much of his work is experimental and socially engaged, seeking places which add vital context to story and experience. Having been creative producer with immersive theatre makers, this

methodology is central to how audiences encounter the programmes Andy supports.

His previous work has been with the Culture team at King's College London, his own company Shrinking Space and further cultural organisations such as Eden Project and Wellcome Collection.

Visit | Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Small-group curator-led tour of Barber collection and current exhibition *Scent and the Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, reflecting on curatorial strategies and organisational contexts. This landmark exhibition is curated by Dr Christina Bradstreet, author of *Scented Visions: Smell in Art, 1850-1914* (PSU Press, 2022). It highlights the role of the olfactory sense and its significance for some of Britain's best-loved art treasures. from collections across the United Kingdom. Artists featured include Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale, John Frederick Lewis, John Everett Millais, Evelyn De Morgan, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Simeon Solomon, and others. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to participate in an optional scent experience that will enliven the scents suggested in certain paintings.

Workshop | Radical Imagination – care centred approaches to curating entangled histories

Rooted in her own doctoral research into the ways in which curatorial methodologies centred in care and prevention of trauma might help museums and galleries to ethically surface and address their imperial and colonial ties, Aïcha Mehrez invites you to think with her and your fellow delegates about what care centred curatorial methodologies might mean to you. Aïcha's research considers how the work of writers and thinkers such as Stuart Hall, Saidiya Hartman, Sylvia Wynter and Édouard Glissant might be applied to a radical reimagining of the ways in which we curate. We will draw upon ideas such as Glissant's 'poetics of relation', Hartman's notion of 'the afterlife of slavery', Hall's ideas around

identity as an unfinished conversation and Wynter's concept of 'being human as praxis' as routes through which we might harness some of the potential energy museums could offer to unearth and address difficult histories and problematic ties rather than perpetuating harmful sedimented narratives. We will be thinking about ecologies of knowledges rather than the accumulation of cultural property, embracing pedagogies of listening rather than telling, creating opportunities for dialogue and personal interactions, responding to the needs to the community, embedding transparent and reflective practices and fostering a sense of empathy.

Aïcha Mehrez is a curator, writer and researcher born and raised in Stockport and currently based in Folkestone. From 2016 - 2021, was Assistant Curator of Contemporary British Art at Tate. Aïcha is currently undertaking a collaborative doctoral research project funded by AHRC with Tate Gallery and the University of Leicester. The title of her thesis is 'How can curatorial methodologies centred in care and prevention of harm help art museums to ethically surface and address connections with slavery and the British Empire?'. Aïcha is a Trustee of Nottingham Contemporary Gallery where she is board champion for equity and diversity and is also a freelance writer, and lecturer on the MA Curating Apprenticeship at University of Teesside/MIMA.

Plenary Roundtable

This concluding plenary roundtable will bring together individuals at different stages of their careers to reflect on some of the wider issues around curatorial practice over the last years. Thinking specifically about curating in the wake of the momentous events of 2020-21 and in the context of the present political climate, the panel will consider the possibilities for the future of the field.

Sarah Victoria Turner is Director of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art in London. She has overseen many innovative

programmes and collaborative projects, including establishing the national art writing competition, Write on Art, with Art UK, co-leading the London-Asia research project, and co-writing and co-hosting the *Sculpting Lives* podcast. She is Editor-in-Chief of the award-winning, open-access journal *British Art Studies* (since its founding in 2015). As an art historian, she has published widely and co-curated several major exhibitions and much of her writing has focused on the entangled relationships between Britain, the British Empire and South Asia. Sarah is co-chair of BAN's Steering Group, together with Alex Farquharson, Director of Tate Britain.

Jazz Swali (he/they) is a curator whose work centres on oppositional thinking and doing through queer art and exhibition-making. They engage queering as a critical mode of investigation, exploring issues such as social justice inequalities in representation and marginalisation in the arts. Jazz is the Curator and Programme Coordinator at Backlit Gallery (Nottingham), serving as Assistant Curator from 2020–23. Independently they have worked with organisations such as CVAN EM, New Art Exchange, UK New Artists, Craftspace, and Nottingham Trent University. They were selected for the 2023 BAN Emerging Curators Group and awarded a BAN Seminar Support Grant in 2024, co-curating with Marta Marsicka a series of seminars to research 'The Future of Curatorship'.

Marta Marsicka is a PhD student at the University of the Arts London and an Artist Development Coordinator at BACKLIT in Nottingham. They are an art historian, curator, and cultural producer examining East-Central European (CEE) identities and representation in post-Brexit Britain through a feminist and transnational lens. Their research encompasses CEE-related art production, curation, facilitation, and the critical examination of migration, xenophobia and institutional critique.

Leanne Green is Head of Exhibitions and Displays at Tate Liverpool where she is leading the curatorial team through a major capital

redevelopment. Her curatorial practice prioritises social engagement and civic-mindedness, as reflected in her most recent project *Traces of Displacement* (2020-23), an AHRC-supported programme combining co-curation, collection-centred research and an exhibition at the Whitworth and The University of Manchester. She was previously Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Whitworth where she led on contemporary acquisitions. She has considerable experience of commissioning and curating including recently: *Larissa Sansour and Soren Lind: Familiar Phantoms* (2023), *Suzanne Lacy: What Kind of City?* (2022) and *Forensic Architecture: Cloud Studies* (2021). She has a PhD in Visual Culture and advocates for research-led curatorial practice.

Melanie Pocock is Artistic Director of Exhibitions at Ikon Gallery. Together with Director Jonathan Watkins, she is responsible for the gallery's artistic programme, including exhibitions, commissions and publications. Prior to joining Ikon, Pocock was Assistant Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) Singapore (2014 – 19), where she organised more than sixty exhibitions with local, regional and international artists.

Visiting Birmingham

Ikon Gallery

Friends in Love and War – L'Éloge des meilleur-es ennemi-es

Tuesday to Sunday, 11:00-17:00, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace

Ikon and macLYON present works by over twenty artists from the British Council Collection and macLYON that explore the theme of friendship.

Grand Union

The Bothy

Minerva Apothecary Garden, Minerva Works

'[The Bothy](#)' is a permanent, outdoor installation intended as a place for people to use for shelter and rest, made by British-Barbadian artist Alberta Whittle, as part of her long-term artist project with Grand Union entitled 'Congregation: Creating Dangerously'.

The Floating Garden

Digbeth Branch Canalside, Fazeley Street

[The Floating Garden](#) was created in partnership with the Canal & River Trust to spread the positive benefits of The Growing Project out into the canal network and to use it as an engagement and learning tool with Grand Union's various community groups and partners.

About the British Art Network

BAN originated as a Subject Specialist Network and is supported by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Tate. BAN's programme is overseen and developed by a team based at Tate and the Paul Mellon Centre, and guided by a Steering Group whose membership reflects a range of relevant experience and backgrounds.

BAN provides bursaries to help Members explore, connect and share research focused on curatorial issues and themes. This may take the form of funds for travel or research time, or financial support for seminars and workshops, collaborations, publications and other forms of exchange and sharing. Bursary-supported activity ranges across historical periods, media and methodologies and reflects a broad understanding of 'British art'.

BAN also organises training opportunities, workshops and conferences, and runs two developmental programmes: the Emerging Curators Group and Curatorial Forum.

Membership of BAN is open to everyone with an active engagement with curating, researching and interpreting British art. To apply for membership, please visit our website. If you would like to get in touch, please email BritishArtNetwork@tate.org.uk.

For more information visit our website:

www.britishartnetwork.org.uk

Cover image: Grand Union, *The Floating Garden, Digbeth Canal-Fazeley Branch*, Birmingham, 2024. Image by Matthew Cox

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Ikon Gallery

Joy Lear-Bernard BSL Interpretation

Midlands Arts Centre

Sasha Bradley BSL Interpretation

The Hive Cafe & Bakery